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PLAYBOOK

The Winning Workforce in a Hybrid Work Environment

**EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT PROJECT
TEAM TLC**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Improving Communication and Transparency

- ◇ To hear and be connected to others' insights, concerns, and ideas around the hybrid work environment, ensure consistent and effective broad and large-scale forums for staff.
- ◇ To grow and enhance organizational culture, consider options for leveraging an employee experience platform that seamlessly integrates and is consistent with existing tools that fulfill functional and as well engagement needs.
- ◇ To fulfill more than just informational needs, ensure the organization provides communication events and resources dedicated to staff well-being.

Strengthening and Adapting Organizational Culture

- ◇ Organizational culture sets the context for everything an organization does. To ensure culture is being reinforced at all levels, start with your leadership team.
- ◇ To strengthen the organizational culture in a hybrid environment, one must create a culture of continuous learning and continuous feedback.
- ◇ Adapting organizational culture is extremely important to ensure a more productive, engaging work environment and increase morale.

Inclusivity and Equity

- ◇ Hybrid work models can feed power differentials within teams, so leaders need to take intentional and proactive measures to balance access to both resources and manager time.
- ◇ Revisit office policies and procedures regularly to ensure they do not provide unfair advantage based on access or proximity.
- ◇ Establish a culture of safety and trust so employees feel empowered to speak up and ask for resources.

Productivity

- ◇ Trust and autonomy are critical to the success of hybrid work environments.
- ◇ Manage for results, not "line of sight" supervision.
 - ◇ Maximize full use of digital collaboration tools (beyond just meetings) to increase opportunities for formal and informal feedback and direction (e.g., "office hours" set for members to "drop in").
- ◇ Focus team productivity benchmarks on the key markers that signify success for your organization.

Professional Development (PD)

- ◇ An organization's PD program should be reassessed to engage, train, and develop employees in all three hybrid categories.
- ◇ With employees now working in different locations, organizations should develop a "culture of learning," where learning is closely aligned with the everyday flow/pace of work. This would provide employees with continuous and contemporaneous feedback on tasks and the opportunity to ask real-time questions.
- ◇ To be successful, a hybrid workplace's PD program should utilize a variety of digital collaboration tools and techniques to blend physical and remote work, and to promote equitable knowledge building and exchange for employees in all hybrid categories.

Welcoming and Successfully Integrating New Hires

- ◇ Setting up new hires for success prior to their start date (e.g., send welcome package; ensure adequate systems set up/operation at worksite locations; schedule introductions to team members).
- ◇ Emphasize 'personal connection' with individuals over 'paperwork' during the new hires' first week(s) on the job.
 - ◇ Extend onboarding process to 'integrate and assimilate' new hires past the first few weeks encouraging questions/feedback, establishing achievable short-term goals.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many federal agencies and their employees in to telework on a massive scale. After initial stumbles, many agencies updated the technology, tools, and bandwidth necessary to successfully support wide scale telework and those employees who minimally needed a telephone and laptop to effectively do their jobs adjusted to the new normal.

As the challenges surrounding the pandemic continue, agencies are now making plans for a new, longer-term “hybrid” environment that often has a mix of people in three categories: 1) in the office, 2) teleworking on a designated day or days during the pay period, and 3) remote employees who will not come into the workplace. This hybrid environment will challenge many agencies’ traditional ways of doing business, as it will be increasingly important to integrate these three categories of employees into the workplace and provide equal opportunities, access, support, and growth (to name a few).

This Playbook focuses on the human side of the new hybrid work environment and provides strategies and best practices for workforce management and support in this new setting. Specifically, this Playbook serves to: 1) identify anticipated and potential barriers that could prevent federal agencies from successfully integrating all employees into the workplace; and 2) support agency efforts by offering strategies and best practices to: successfully strengthen and adapt organizational culture, improve communication and transparency, welcome and successfully on-board new hires, rethink professional development, and enhance productivity, inclusivity, and equity. We hope that many federal agencies and managers will find this Playbook useful and are able to draw and implement strategies from it.

Improving Communication and Transparency

Context	<p>Leadership needs to include more than just delegating work and communicating how to do tasks. Leaders must keep constant awareness and maintenance of the humanity in the workplace which is the backbone of successful communication among all staff levels — both in person and in the hybrid or remote realm.</p> <p>The Harvard Business Review suggestions that “one of the big questions many leaders are facing now is: how can we meaningfully communicate, collaborate, and connect in a hybrid (or remote) environment?” The challenge becomes how do we stay on the “track” if we are riding in different “trains,” which can be remote work, telework and in the office. To continually address this challenge, employee engagement and work platform, technologically- or culturally-based, need to be fully functional and integrated for a reliable and trusted environment and transparent culture.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>See Inclusivity and Equity Section for further discussion.</i></p>
Best Practices	
Cyclical Awareness and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide frequent, if not daily, check-ins to provide staff opportunity to speak openly about their work experience and concerns and inquire how you can support them. • Consistently and effectively hold larger and broader forums for staff to hear and be connected to others’ insights, concerns, and ideas around the hybrid work environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include forums such as town halls, moderated Q&A video calls, and survey discussions.
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice less is more when deciding which and how many platforms employees utilize in their daily work life, from human resources and leadership communications to office-level and team engagement. • Leverage an employee experience platform that seamlessly integrates and is consistent with existing tools to digitally enhance and grow organizational culture: creating connections, surfacing knowledge, capturing feedback, and providing it in staff’s natural flow of work.
Employee Well-Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure leadership has the time and space to show kindness and express genuine interest in the staff’s work, on a frequent and consistent basis so communication is continuous rather than a task. • Sponsor benefits and wellness webinars on a variety of topics in different formats. • Consider a dedicated area on staff intranet site to provide comprehensive resources for all previous hybrid or remote work communications (i.e., events, self-help guidance and other links) as well as upcoming sessions focused on the future of work concerns.

Diagnostic Questions

- How will you identify and manage the horizontal and vertical communications (leadership to staff and staff to staff) in a hybrid workplace?
- How will you manage public announcements and updates about changes to the work environment, organization-wide and across different teams?
- What timing and awareness is needed before external communications?
- What legal aspects of communication need to be addressed such as recording town halls and chats during events?
- What ground rules (privacy and protection) need to be set and understood by all staff communicating in a hybrid/online environment?

Learning Videos:

[How to Have a Hybrid Meeting That Works for Everyone](#)



[Culture and Belonging in the Hybrid Workforce: Top Tips for Employee Engagement in 2021 and Beyond](#)



[How to Manage a Hybrid Workforce](#)



Strengthening and Adapting Organizational Culture

Context

An organization's culture defines the proper way to behave within the organization. This culture consists of shared beliefs and values established by leaders and then communicated and reinforced through various methods, ultimately shaping employees' perceptions, behaviors and understanding. Organizational culture sets the context for everything an organization does.

To ensure culture is being reinforced at all levels, start with your leadership team. Constantly communicate values and be transparent about expectations going forward for hybrid work. Make room for questions and discussions among your leadership team, and always be open to change. Empowering and encouraging leadership gives them autonomy over their style and manner of leading their team to a unified goal.

Adapting organizational culture is extremely important to ensure a more productive, engaging work environment and to increase organizational morale. It may look different for all organizations, so flexibility is important to allow employees to do their best work anywhere, while still enabling the organization to thrive.

In order to strengthen organizational culture in a hybrid environment, you must create a culture of continuous learning and continuous feedback. This can be accomplished through technology with onsite and a remote workforce. It is important to let your employees know the impact they make with their work, by aligning employee's meaningful work with the organization's mission.

Another key to strengthening organizational culture is to start with trust and not micromanaging employees. Communicate regularly with your people to ask if they have everything they need to get their jobs done — but don't micromanage with too many meetings or calls to check on a project's progress.

Prioritizing mental health has proven to be of utmost importance for longevity, productivity, retention, and overall organizational growth and success— particularly since the pandemic. Employers who fail to emphasize the importance of mental health and employee wellbeing risk losing confidence among their team in their leadership abilities.

Best Practices

- Offer trainings and seminars on how to effectively work from home to employees.
- Implement new training programs regarding remote technology and the importance of cybersecurity protocols.
- Take strides to adjust work culture and communication standards to the new work model.
- Maintain employee trust and confidence by ensuring that you have proper systems in place to accommodate the new work structure.
- To ensure everyone is on the same page, opt for remote-first communication when providing direction and important organizational information.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be flexible yet consistent in meeting employees’ needs. • Implement a knowledge management system by having all critical documents, notes, standards, and best practices available and easily accessible. • Adopt collaboration tools since teams can be in many different locations (<i>See Improving Communication and Transparency for further discussion</i>). 	
<p>Diagnostics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you keep onsite and remote workers effectively collaborating? • What resources are needed for remote workers to successfully do their jobs?
<p>Learning Videos:</p>	<p>Implementing a Hybrid Workplace Strategy</p> <p>How to Adapt to the NEW Work Environment Without Losing your Top Talent</p>

Inclusivity and Equity

Context	<p>The business case for diversity, equity, and inclusion is stronger than ever. Research shows that restructuring events are critical moments that can either exacerbate or reduce inequity.</p> <p>Diversity describes all the ways we are different and similar. Inclusion involves bringing together and harnessing these diverse resources. Inclusion puts the concept and practice of diversity into action by creating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection—where the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives are harnessed to create improved solutions or outcomes. Various aspects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. <u>Inclusive Diversity</u>: A set of behaviors that promote collaboration among a diverse group of employees B. <u>Workplace Inclusion</u>: Cultivates a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness to enable individuals to contribute at their fullest potential C. <u>Equality</u>: The state of being equal, especially in status, with respect to rights and opportunity D. <u>Equity</u>: The quality of being fair and impartial <p>The shift toward a hybrid work environment can both accelerate old challenges and create new ones, especially when it comes to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). By taking a closer look at how power structures persist in this new environment, we can help ensure our organizations not only avoid common DEI issues, but also use this moment to improve and build a better organizational culture.</p>
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Best Practices

Equalize the employee experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion is setting an environment that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness that enables individuals to contribute at their fullest potential. This set of behaviors and norms encourages employees to feel valued for their unique qualities and experience a sense of belonging. • Hybrid work models are inextricably tied to power and influence in the work place — it creates power differentials within teams that can damage relationships, impede effective collaboration, and ultimately reduce performance. Due to where they're positioned (in the office or teleworking), employees will have different access to resources and different levels of visibility — both key sources of power and influence. For example, employees in the office tend to have faster and easier access to information, and that information tends to be more current and broader (including informal water-cooler conversations), which provides them with an edge when it comes to the rapid changes of today's environment. • Many of these issues arise from a lack of awareness of the power imbalances these systems create. For example, one social psychology concept called "The Mere Exposure Effect" explains the human tendency to favor people, situations and things that are familiar vs. those that are unfamiliar. Another related concept is "The Proximity Effect," or the fact that people in close physical proximity to one another are more likely to form interpersonal relationships than those who
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	<p>are distanced. Increased exposure, increased familiarity, increased (subconscious) favoritism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take steps to promote awareness of these issues and educate teams on how to avoid such biases based on whether a person is in the office or not. • Revisit office policies and procedures regularly to ensure they do not provide unfair advantage based on access or proximity. For example, key performance indicators shouldn't align with accessibility to in-office resources. • Establish a culture of safety and trust so employees feel empowered to speak up and ask for resources.
Position each team member for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For supervisors, consider who you are spending the most time with and if you are giving key pieces of advice, mentorship, and opportunities to all employees, regardless of where and how they work. • Practice transparency when assigning tasks. Make sure the same individuals are not routinely given more opportunities, and do not assign opportunities based on stereotypical roles (e.g., share burdens equally for roles; notetakers for meetings; completing administrative tasks; organizing office events). • Support <u>all</u> colleagues' efforts to take advantage of rotations, training, and career development opportunities.
Question your assumptions...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About the productivity of an individual based solely on how much time they spend in the office vs. teleworking. (<i>see Productivity Section for more detail</i>) • About why a colleague does or does not telework. • About what team members want and need. Practice empathy by learning about your team members' experiences if they are comfortable sharing and put yourself in their shoes to better understand their needs and aspirations, what energizes them, and how you can be a resource.
Practice inclusive communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all meetings include virtual components, even if some are in the office, and make sure to provide needed training to everyone on the team for the technology tools used. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meeting organizers should pay special attention to inclusion of remote participants in the discussion and decision-making process. • Remember that remote and office employees will have different levels of access to information and resources. Information that may more easily circulate informally within the office may be missed by remote employees. Making information accessible to all will benefit all team members. • Spontaneous conversations can and should happen in person, but managers should also be deliberate about encouraging employees to loop in or follow up with colleagues whose equities are involved but who were not present. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teams can simulate these types of interactions with online consultation hours, like a professor's office hours. Similarly, to simulate teams' informal ways of aligning their work onsite, teams could organize daily digital 15-minute stand-ups where team members share what they did the day before and what they will work on that day, signaling roadblocks and reaching out for help or feedback from team members. <p><i>See Improving Communication and Transparency Section for more information.</i></p>

Diagnostic Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What story am I telling myself about a colleague’s experiences or behaviors? What data am I missing? • How inclusive is my approach? How are others perceiving the level of inclusion and equity? • Who is missing from the conversation and why?
Learning Resources	<p>Article: HBR: How to Measure Inclusion in the Workplace</p> <p>Article: HBR: Making the Hybrid Workplace Fair</p> <p>Article: Why our brains fall for false expertise, and how to stop it</p> <p>Video: Driving inclusive and effective meetings at Microsoft with Microsoft Teams</p> <p>Podcast: Dimensions of Diversity: How to Remain Inclusive in a Hybrid Workplace</p>

Productivity

Context	While there are many factors at play in navigating the hybrid work environment, productivity is a key consideration. Productivity is simply how efficient one is at completing tasks. It's directly tied to effectiveness, which, in turn, can be defined as "the capability of producing a desired result." Is the new structure more or less productive than models of the past? Pre-pandemic studies by Stanford researchers and others found that employee performance/productivity in a work from home environment improved by 13 to 35 percent when compared to traditional office workers. The practices and information provided below will help agencies address productivity in the hybrid work environment.
Best Practices	
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage for results, not just "line of sight" supervision. Just because an employee is in the office or emailing frequently does not mean they are more productive than an employee working from home on a particular project. • Trust and autonomy are critical to the success of hybrid work environments where managers are not always able to "see" the process. • To overcome any perceived bias against the hybrid work model, managers must value everyone's contributions equally. The use of multiple communication channels, clear goal setting, and proper task delegation also helps keep teams on the same page. • Meetings including both in-office and teleworking staff should be planned and managed to be virtual-friendly for those attending remotely to ensure full engagement and communication. • Maximize full use of collaboration tools (beyond just meetings) such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom to increase opportunities for formal and informal communication (e.g., "office hours" set aside for members to "drop in").
Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The productivity benchmarks you measure for your team should focus on those key markers that signify success for your organization. • Especially in the hybrid environment, focus on outcomes in assessing performance and promote transparency around how people use their time and flexibility to get work done. • Here's a short list of possible productivity metrics for both in-office and telework staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The rate that tasks are completed on time ○ The number of tasks that are completed ○ Quality of completed work ○ Feedback from customers ○ Availability during work hours
Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While remote and teleworkers report better work-life balance due to higher productivity and lack of commutes, etc., they also show a tendency toward longer working hours and higher workloads; factors that should be monitored by managers to prevent burnout and other negative impacts to employees.

<p>Diagnostic Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What barriers (systemic or situational) might impede individuals reaching peak performance in the hybrid environment? What can I do to address these? • For each employee’s performance: What are the key outputs needed from this position and how can we track success in meeting those objectives?
<p>Value Added Information – Productivity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are remote workers more productive? Perhaps counter-intuitively, recent survey information indicates that remote workers (and likely hybrid workplace workers as well) fare better than their full-time cubicle counterparts in many areas: • According to French researchers Bergeaud and Cette in 2021, teleworking seems to have a positive impact on productivity if workers are engaged, adequately prepared, and trained and have the appropriate equipment and work environment at home. • PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) conducted multiple surveys during the COVID-19 Pandemic and found both employees and employers reported improved productivity over time as telework experience grew. • 77% of remote workers in a Connect Solutions Survey reported overall higher productivity when using hybrid work environments. • An International Workplace Group (IWG) Report in 2019 found that 85% of international businesses believed that flexible (i.e. hybrid) workplaces had made their companies more productive. • The 2019 IWG Report reported gains in productivity due to hybrid workplaces of at least 20% and more in some countries. • 81% of remote workers state that their communication with colleagues is good or excellent. • Remote workers take less sick leave since many continue working if there are no concerns about bringing contagious illnesses to the office. • 89% of employees believe that a flexible (i.e. hybrid) job would help them take better care of themselves and 88% of people who had to take a break from work due to difficult personal circumstances report that they would have been able to keep working in a flexible work environment. • The average daily roundtrip commute in America is 52 minutes. Eliminating commutes provides better work/life balance and reduces health risks associated with commuting. • Companies that allow employees to work remotely have a 25% lower employee turnover rate and 76% of workers report they would be more loyal to their company if it offered flexible (hybrid) work options.
<p>Learning Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article, <i>Fast Company</i>: How to Maximize Productivity in a Hybrid Work Environment • Article, <i>HBR</i>: Let's Redefine "Productivity" for the Hybrid Era • OPM Website, Services for Agencies: Telework and Hybrid Solutions Training <p>Future of Hybrid Working How to Do Hybrid Meetings Right</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div data-bbox="380 1451 745 1656"> <p>Gartner Future of Hybrid Working</p> </div> <div data-bbox="883 1451 1234 1648"> <p>Psst... Hybrid is Here</p> </div> </div>

Professional Development

Context

While the hybrid work environment may present challenges to an organization's professional development (PD) program, as traditional "only in person" training may be used less frequently than in the past, it also presents a unique opportunity to rethink effective strategies to engage, train, and further develop employees in all three hybrid categories (in-person, telework, or remote). Doing so would result in an even more inclusive work environment that has broader participation of traditionally underrepresented or less-vocal employees as well as employees with disabilities, familial responsibilities, or travel restrictions, for example. Further, providing these opportunities fairly to all will enhance each employee's work experience, which will hopefully result in higher morale, job satisfaction, retention (as employee turnover has become a significant problem for organizations to overcome during the pandemic), productivity, and effectiveness.

Best Practices

Seeking Feedback

Conduct a detailed survey of each individual you directly supervise about their self-identified areas of growth/interest and identify specific ways (tailored to their hybrid category) to develop their skillset in those areas (*e.g.* finding a virtual training on a subject for a remote employee, or an "in the field" training for an employee who is comfortable attending in person). This is key in a hybrid work environment that can sometimes feel lonely and isolating.

Consider also seeking feedback about how employees in one hybrid category (*i.e.*, in person) interact with others who are in their same category or in a different category (*i.e.*, telework) as well as how they perceive employees in different categories and how they feel they're being perceived. This type of survey could reveal inequities, or even exclusivity, in PD for employees in the different hybrid categories (*e.g.*, an in-person employee is excluding remote colleagues from meetings or events) that can then be addressed.

A Culture of Learning in the Flow of Work

In a hybrid work environment, employees may not all be in one location or interact with one another each day unless they are proactively encouraged. As such, organizations should develop a "culture of learning" where learning is a part of the employee's everyday activities (regardless of which hybrid category they're in). Learning activities should be closely aligned with the everyday flow/pace of work (*i.e.*, in real-time as tasks are being completed) in order to provide continuous and contemporaneous feedback, and demonstrate the skills needed to complete the task at hand. This culture of learning should give employees the room and safety to explore their skills, acknowledge where they need support, and share where they can assist others in their own areas of strengths.

Managers and employees in all three hybrid categories should work together to develop these learning activities, as they may be most effective when specifically tailored for each hybrid category – this collaborative effort would also leave employees feeling more visible, supported, connected, and empowered to lead. For example, a new remote employee is struggling with how to complete a specific type of work assignment. That employee's in-office manager suggests that they meet through a virtual platform and work through an actual assignment together so that the manager can better identify exactly what the employee may be struggling with. As the employee is showing (through the use of a shared screen feature) or describing to the manager the steps they'd take, the manager can provide contemporaneous feedback to address any issues they're seeing (*e.g.*, the new employee missed a step or assumed a step wasn't necessary). That way, the learning is done through the natural flow of completing

the assignment and in a “safe” setting that shows the employee that their manager is invested in their development. Such a culture would result in employees being more engaged and satisfied (as they won’t feel “forgotten” or “left behind” in a hybrid environment) while continuously improving their performance, efficiency, and productivity.

Digital Tools and Strategies to Support PD and Collaboration

To be successful, a hybrid workplace’s PD program must have the right assortment of tools, learning activities, and learning settings. It should also utilize a variety of digital collaboration tools and techniques to blend physical and remote work, and to promote equitable knowledge building and exchange for employees in all hybrid categories. Utilizing a wide array of learning opportunities will also get broader participation from diverse groups of employees. Here are some examples of PD activities to consider:

- Deliver formal training in varying formats, including: self-directed learning; self-directed learning with live (virtual or in-person) groups to discuss the training material/topic; or a more traditional, fully live training (virtual or in-person) that is interactive and engaging. These varying formats will provide maximum flexibility to employees in all hybrid categories with respect to how and when they learn. Further, using different digital collaboration tools (such as virtual breakout sessions, whiteboards, use of chat box feature, or polls) for all trainings, regardless of their format, enable employees in various locations to interact with and learn from one another.
- Organize a series of shorter, targeted learning activities, as they are more effective and easier to schedule in a hybrid environment (with varying work schedules) and foster ongoing collaboration and communication.
- Create an electronic internal learning hub (accessible to all) that consolidates various training tools, resources, and exemplars across different teams/regions.
- Develop a formal mentorship program where interested employees are partnered with more-experienced colleagues and managers they don’t typically work with. This allows folks in different hybrid categories to connect with each other and serves as a leadership opportunity for the mentor.
- Engage in cross-region or business-unit work to increase human connection and gain exposure to different individuals and workstyles.
- Create an informal “buddy” program, where buddies can provide support to new hires or interns and answer any “simple” questions or serve as a learning resource if time-sensitive questions arise (e.g., providing real-time guidance to a difficult caller on the customer service line). The buddy dynamic could differ depending on the employees’ hybrid categories (e.g., -in-office buddies who go for a walk together, or remote buddies who virtually eat lunch together).

Learning Resources:

- Podcast: [“Get Reworked” Podcast Full Episode List](#)
- A [2020 Survey from getAbstract](#) revealed that employees of all generations who frequently engaged in learning felt more fulfilled (resulting in less turnover), accomplished, and motivated. Also:
 - More than half of Millennials (58 percent) and Gen Z (52 percent) said that success in their careers depends on frequently updating their workplace skills and knowledge. An overwhelming majority (93 percent) said it was at least somewhat important that their employers provided resources for ongoing learning, while younger generations were more likely to indicate that it was extremely or very important.

Welcoming and Successfully Integrating New Hires

Context:

The Importance of Effective Onboarding

One of the most important ways that organizations can improve the effectiveness of their talent management systems is through the strategic use of onboarding- the process of helping new hires adjust to social and performance aspects of their new jobs quickly and smoothly.

A positive onboarding experience is particularly important for newly hired employees, including in the hybrid environment. Research shows that a positive onboarding experience leads to employee retention and improved team effectiveness. A successful onboarding plan in the hybrid environment needs to be intentional, strategic, and ongoing in order to ensure that all new employees feel welcome and connected to the organization and helps in setting clear expectations and boundaries.

Best Practices:

As the New Hire Starts.

- Set them up for success – send them a welcome package
- Prepare their technology – ensure computer/business equipment/email/connectivity needs are set up ahead of time; assign IT or experienced personnel to assist new employee and able to respond effectively and efficiently for challenges off-site.
- Consider how to best stay in touch and create connection and feedback loops not just with leadership but also with their new teams across the office. Give an overview of affinity or social groups in your agency that might be of interest and offer to help get them connected Research suggests that it is important to connect with a new hire as soon as possible. This will likely increase the overall level of the new hire’s commitment to organization.

During the New Hire’s 1st Week: Emphasize Personal Connection Over Paperwork

- Assign to the new employee an informal “buddy” or “Phone-a-Friend” who can be accessible both in the office and remotely (text, WhatsApp, Teams, etc.). The buddy should proactively provide support to the new team member and serve as a sounding board, contact, and someone else they can get to know outside of the management chain and immediate work team. This can help expand connectivity that happens more organically when individuals are in physical proximity in an office.
- Build workplace relations – welcome them warmly, perhaps through a video meeting or team introductory video; consider making the meeting informal and a casual discussion regarding each person’s life/business experiences, or sharing through an exercise, such as a “life journey map.”
- Introduce organizational policies, culture, work schedules, and organizational videos.
- Schedule one on one time with the new hire’s manager.
- Develop a strategic plan for success for the new hire.
- Set aside time to walk new employees through software tools, virtual files and apps, while keeping in mind to support them collaboratively through screen sharing and video calls.

Extend the Onboarding Process: The ‘Integration and Assimilation Period’

- Maintain clear communication – schedule regular virtual meetings to assess progress.
- Solicit and encourage ongoing questions and feedback until the new hire is comfortable with their job responsibilities.

- Consider asking the employee to **voluntarily** complete a 360° assessment (if practical and achievable), which can be invaluable in assisting supervisors/mentors in getting to know the employee faster, to, develop strategies for the most effective way to assist in the employee’s development, and to allow the employee to introspect and identify subconscious likes and dislikes.
- Prepare an Individualized Development Plan (IDP) for the new employee that contains long- and short-term goals appropriate to the hybrid work environment.
 1. Short Term Goals in the IDP: Assign a small, attainable goal/project, and collaborate with new employee in developing a clear plan for the first 30, 60 and 90 days so that both supervisor/mentor and employee are aligned in communication and expectations for their role and project/assignment. This contributes towards the new employee’s self-efficacy/confidence.
 2. Long Term Goals in the IDP: It should be noted that long term goals may need to be delayed until after the new hire is operating comfortably in the position.

Questions for New Hires

- Do you consider yourself an introvert or extrovert?
- What learning style (i.e., visual, auditory, reading, or writing) best suits you?
- What communication style/format are you most comfortable with?
- What are some effective strategies you’ve used or hope to use to manage, motivate, and engage yourself in a hybrid workplace?
- Do you have any suggestions for how we can help you develop relationships with your colleagues and stakeholders, and how to maintain those relationships?

Learning Resources:

[Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success -SHRM](#)

[How To Welcome A New Employee To The Team - VIDEO](#)

[Employee Onboarding Video Template \(Editable\) - VIDEO](#)

[10 Best Practices to Improve Employee Onboarding - VIDEO](#)

Increase Job Satisfaction
• Jump start relationships

Increase Performance
• Clarify delivery expectations
• Clarify objectives

Innoculate Against Turnover
• Provide support through feedback, coaching and follow-up

Onboarding helps new employees adjust to their jobs by establishing better relationships to increase satisfaction, clarifying expectations and objectives to improve performance, and providing support to help reduce unwanted turnover.

4 Levers for Successful Onboarding

Selection + **Self-Efficacy** + **Role Clarity** + **Social Integration** + **Knowledge of Culture** = **Successful Onboarding**

After selection and entry, new employees go through multiple adjustments.

Resources:

Improving Communication and Transparency

- Anderson, D. and S. Seth, 'In a Hybrid World, Your Tech Defines Employee Experience' Harvard Business Review (2022) Link: [In a Hybrid World, Your Tech Defines Employee Experience](#)
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